40: Burr--149-150 N-2 (no date) 1931 Yakut
116, 177, 186, 212, 635

" They [150] are an interesting and vigorous people, one of the few indigenous Siberian folk who can stand up to civilization. They number some three hundred thousand, and cover a vast area of north-eastern Siberia. They are ambitious and determined to acquire culture. They have a definite national consciousness, now expressed in the Yakut Autonomous Socialistic Republic with its capital at Yakutsk. True, there are hardly enough educated men among them yet to administer the young state, so that most of the officials are Russians. But they are making great strides in education, and of recent years have reduced their language to writing. It is characteristic that they have not adopted the Cyrillic alphabet from the Russians for this purpose, but the Latin, with various modifications, to express their numerous guttural vowels. This is the only item in their modern culture which they have not borrowed directly from their Russian neighbours, and the fact is in harmony with the policy of the Soviets, who are encouraging the Turanian and other peoples of the Union to take not Russian but Latin letters. "

636.16 - 636.87

24: Wrangell--192 G-3 (1820-23) 1842 Yakut
116, 166, 511, 651, 177.16 Russia
636.16

"The Tschuwanzi and Jukahiri of the greater Aniuj, from having had far less intercourse with the Russians than has been the case with the dwellers on the banks of the lesser Aniuj, have retained much more of their original language, manners, and customs. The Lamuti and Tungusi along these two rivers have also lost their tame reindeer, and now live poorly on the uncertain produce of the chase and the fisheries. Nor are those Jakuti much better off, who have been brought by the government from the banks of the Aldan, to aid in transporting provisions and other stores to the fort which formerly existed on the Anadyr. Separated from the rest of their countrymen, they have forgotten even their language, and have assimilated to the Russians in manners, mode of life, and even physical appearance. They live almost exclusively by fishing, and their only domestic animals are the dogs which they use for draught.

The population on the banks of the Aniuj has increased latterly, but this cannot be regarded as a sign of improvement in the condition of the people. It is caused by the influx of different nomade tribes, who, having lost their reindeer by sickness or other causes, have been forced to seek their subsistence in the neighbourhood of the rivers, like the rest of their countrymen. The number of persons in this district who still continue to lead a nomade life does not exceed 400. All the inhabitants are subject to a yearly tribute, which they pay partly in furs and partly in money."

44: Gilder -- 175 J-2 (1882) 1883 Yakut
116, 161, 177, 342, 361 Russia
636.36

"Sradnia, or Middle Kolymsk, is a Russian settlement of about 500 inhabitants, including Russians Yakouts, and a few Tchouktchis. The houses are all built of hewn logs, are but one story high, and the windows are glazed with blocks of transparent ice. Some of the houses have windows of glass, but these are always much broken and mended, so that seen from the outside they look like the stained-glass windows of a church. The most conspicuous building there, as in all the little Russian towns, is the church edifice, which is of Oriental architecture, with a dome surmounted by a cross and exceedingly florid in its style of architecture. Adjoining the church, and within the same enclosure, is a small wooden tower surrounded by a block-house, which was built by the first settlers of Sradnia as a means of defence against the savage Yakouts and Tchouktchis. This town is irregularly built and extends over a considerable area of ground, the Government buildings being situated about a mile from the centre. By Government buildings is meant merely the storehouses for grain and bread and for the skins which are received for taxes. These buildings are of logs, with great heavy doors and padlocks about the size of an ordinary valise, while the key is a load of itself."

45: Lesseps--200 T-2 (1788) 1790 Yakut
116, 161, 177, 361 Russia
636, 36

"I travelled the whole night, and arrived in the morning at the fort of Taousk, being a distance of forty-two wersts. [RCH: from the village of Armani] This ostrog, where, on conformity to the plan we had laid down, we spent the day, is situated on the river Taon. It contains twenty isbas, [RCH: Russian-type dwellings made of wood] a small church served by the vicar of Okotsk, and a building for the reception of tributes, surrounded by palisades in the form of bastions. Twenty Yakouts, two chiefs, and some other Koriacs, who, attracted by the situation, have settled there, make up the whole of the inhabitants. The garrison consists of fifteen soldiers, commanded by a serjeant named Okhotin, at whose house I took up my abode till the evening.

In the night I passed through the village of Gorbé, peopled by Yakouts, and a small number of Koriacs."

38: Dobell--39-40 G-2 (1812-13) 1830 Yakut
116, 234, 465, 177.46 Russia
636.46

"Those Yakut labourers and herdsmen employed by the Russian inhabitants appeared to me to be very well off: for instance, a common labourer receives two really good and comfortable suits of clothes a year, and forty to fifty roubles in money, besides being very well fed. If a herdsman, and one who undertakes the care of twenty cows, he gets the milk of five or six cows for his trouble; and for the remaining [40] fourteen or fifteen, he is bound only to deliver thirty pounds of butter per cow to the owner during the summer. The skimmed milk, and whatever butter he may make beyond the quantity stipulated, are all his own. In case of accident or death of any of the herd, he is not responsible unless it happens through his want of care. From this statement it will be perceived that a herdsman has considerable advantages; for it must be a very bad cow that will not yield more than thirty pounds of butter during the summer. The Yakuts, however, know how to manage horses better than horned cattle. Their calves are never weaned until they are a year old; nor will a cow give down her milk unless the calf is brought to her; and if the calf dies she will give no more milk. This is a Yakut custom that only prevails in the eastern parts of Siberia."

17: Erman--258-260 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-3
116, 291, 511, 557, 177.55 Russia
636.55

"Sunduki and Nyuis are likewise Yakutian villages, with a small share of Russian population. The dwellings here are extremely neat, and both the food and clothing of the people bear witness to their comfortable circumstances. The women, generally, wear in the house, a gown of some coloured web; the men wear short over-coats of reindeer skin, with the hair turned in, and the outside leather-coloured. A young Yakutian woman replied to me, with great naïvetè, as I was commending her housekeeping, 'That all the Russians now seemed to think as I did, for they were no longer above marrying a Yakut.' In [259] fact, the envy which the opulence of the Asiatics has usually awakened in the minds of the European invaders, takes here the deceitful appearance of esteem. The Russians flatter the strong, because these will not allow themselves to be imposed upon.

The lowest temperature to-day was —2 R. The morning was cloudy, and snow fell a little before noon. After that the sky became quite clear, and continued so for half an hour, till we found ourselves beyond Bukhturminsk, between high cliffs. Then there came on suddenly a gust, with a whirlwind from the west; in a few seconds the upper part of the heavens was covered with thick and heavy clouds. Before us dark streaks hung down from the edges of the lowering masses, without touching the horizon, and while I was thinking how like this looked to a summer hail-storm, we heard, all at once,

the rattling of the falling stones, and were overwhelmed with compact and heavy pieces of ice. They had the form of tetrahedrons, three lines long on each side, and, when crushed, broke into regular triangular laminae. They wanted only the rounding off of one of the surfaces which is usually seen in summer hail. Taken in conjunction with what I thus experienced myself, some meteorological statements of the peasants in Dubrova seemed important. They told me that in their country there were hail storms in winter too, and, in answer to a question of mine, they asserted, that they had also known instances of thunder and lightning in winter; such a storm had occurred, for instance, the preceding year, about Christmas, with mist, after very severe frost. On the north-west coast of America, indeed, where the humid and warm sea air falls on the cold land, I have known hail and electric storms in winter, but such a phenomenon in the middle of the continent was quite unexpected. Storms of this kind are unknown in Irkutsk and in Yakutsk, and must therefore be regarded as local effects of the air issuing from the narrower parts of the valley. In fact, the suddenness of congelation and precipitation which gives rise to hail and electric clouds, suggest themselves to the mind when we think of the humid air from between the cliffs, with the much colder air of the adjacent plains; and, accordingly, winter hail and winter thunder-storms appear to characterize the region of goitre on the Lena, as distinctly as the absence of summer hail characterizes

the valleys of the Alps where cretinism is most prevalent.

We arrived in the morning at the Russian houses of Yerbinsk, thirty-five versts from Nyuis, which lie on the left [260] bank, in a fertile opening of the valley encircled by hills, on which pine woods are intermingled with bare rocks. On the way here from Irkutsk, I had hitherto always observed a very weak eastern declination of the magnetic needle; we were therefore not far from the line of no declination. Here, in Yerbinsk, it was apparent that we had crossed that line yesterday for the third time in the course of our journey, and that we were now again, as we had been in Kiakhta and in Europe, in a division of the earth having a western declination."

46: Cottrell--137 T-2 (1840) 1842 Yakut
116, 177, 622, 623 Russia
636.62

"The former [RCH: i.e., Yakuts] are divided into communities, which are governed by golovás and knaizetzes or ancients. The first are chosen among the second, and they from and by the common people; all, however, are subject to provincial commissaries appointed by the Russian government. From the resemblance between the Russian word knäs or prince, and knaizetz, the latter got the title of highness in Russia, but the Yakuts before the Russian conquest even never had independent princes. The title of golová, on the contrary, being one of very slight importance in Russia, they were placed below the knaizetzes, though at home they enjoy much higher rank and authority."

17: Erman-- 273-274 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut-1-2
116, 115, 622, 631, 177.63 Russia
636.63

"In Ulakhansk, sixty-one versts from Toyon aruin, I met in the yard where we alighted a noble chieftain of the Yakuts, who was on his way to a judicial inquiry. He was distinguished from the rest of his countrymen by superior stature, for the Yakuts, though broad-shouldered and very strong-boned, are collectively not above the middle size. He was also in good case, as befits, according to the ideas of the Yakuts, those who are well off; for the adage says, 'To eat much meat and to grown fat upon it, is the highest destiny of men.' I admired this man's frock, made of blue cloth with red facings and white metal buttons; it had an old-fashioned European look, and was, doubtless, made in imitation of some suit of honour presented to one of his predecessors by the Tsar. He gave me to understand, however, with national pride, that his genuine Yakutian cap was better worth looking at and more valuable also. It was lined with squirrel-skins, and outside was very artificially made up of sable, otter, and black fox furs; it had, moreover, very odd-looking appendages made of the fur of the glutton, which hung down over his back.

This chief's feelings respecting the dignity of his nation, and above all, of his own dignity, displayed themselves throughout all his conversation, which he carried on in broken Russian. --Thus, he always named Yakutsk 'the city of the Yakuts;' and he congratulated me on my prospect of soon visiting its rich yurts. He told me that the administration of justice, and the general internal management of society among the

Yakuts, are still left in their hands. Their immediate chiefs and magistrates are still of their own nation, . . . The whole race has been divided, from time immemorial, into certain tribes; each of which is again distributed into Ulúsi, [RCH: the Ulus is a sub-tribe] or communes. The heads of the latter are chosen by the Yakuts, from the chief families, for life. They are called Toyoni; which [274] the Russians very properly translate by Knyás or prince. But it is extremely unbecoming, on the other hand, to put these nobles and other heads of tribes on an equal footing with the mayor of a Russian village, and so entitle them merely gólova! These principal dignitaries remain in office only three years; the Yakuts always choose them from the number of their acknowledged princes, and they are therefore not inferior, certainly, to a Russian governor; and, particularly, because the charge of public administration among the Yakuts is defrayed by that people themselves. When he and other Toyoni required cattle on the road for an official journey, they levied them not on the Russians, but on their own people."

6: Sauer--112-113 G-5 (1785-94) 1802 Yakut-1-2
116, 161, 178, 651, 177.65 Russia
636.65

"Their number is computed at Yakutsk to be 50,000 males; but I am inclined to think that they are not so numerous; and my reasons are these: They say themselves, that in 1780 they were more numerous than they are now, much better circumstanced, and in an increasing state. At that time they had only one Commander and his Assistant. (1)

1. I am here induced to remark, that before the Empress Catherine II established governments and courts of justice throughput the empire (1782), all these distant towns and districts were governed by a voyavod and his secretary, and Cossacs were sent among the tributary tribes to enforce the imperial mandates. On the establishment of the government, every town had its mayor and different courts of justice allowed; so that there now exist many towns in these remote parts, where the inhabitants consist of government people only.

Upon the Socha chiefs bringing their annual tribute, they always observed the custom of shewing their particular attachment, by making these gentlemen a [113] trifling present of furs, horses, and cattle, and supplying their table with flesh, fish, milk, and butter, and also with wild fowl. Considering their immense possessions, and the cheapness of all the articles, these presents were never felt as of any consequence by the

individuals who made them. At present, however, their stock is considerably diminished, not amounting to one tenth part of what it was. Instead of having only the voyavod and his secretary to deal with, they now know not how many commanders they have to pay their respects to. A commandant, a captain of the district, a director of economy, judges of the different courts of justice, with their secretaries and dependants, and other officers, are occasional travellers among them; beside which, they complain of numberless exactions according to the arbitrary will of their superiors, only authorised by their own presumption.

These circumstances undoubtedly discourage the activity of the Yakut, who no longer endeavors to procure wealth, because it is the likeliest means of making him the object of persecution. Thus property, tranquillity, and population decrease. The princes or chiefs dwelling near towns acquire their luxuries, and oppress their dependant tribes to procure wine and brandy in addition to their koumis: this was never known among them till the year 1785. I will farther add, that in 1784 the district of Gigansk produced 4834 tributary natives; but in 1789 their number amounted only to 1938. Mr. Bonnar, the captain of the district of Zashiversk, told me, that the tributary nations in his circle amounted to only half the number that they were five years ago and that these were very poor indeed."

9: Stadling--112 E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut
116, 167, 651, 177.65 Russia
636.65

"The historical records of those times, scanty though they are, serve, in addition to the traditions of the natives, to show the manner in which the latter were subjugated to Russian rule. Having by finesse or by firearms made themselves lords and masters, and robbed the natives of their furs and skins, these scoundrels compelled them to contribute annually, under the name of Yassak or taxes, a large quantity of sable and other valuable furs, and in consequence they were soon reduced to extreme want and famine. A large number of them fled to the most distant parts of the country to the north and north-east, but the invaders followed them even down to the Arctic sea and to the border of the land of the Tschuktchis, compelling them to pay the Yassak. These adventurers met with very little resistance; only the then numerous Yukagirs and Lamuts fought bravely for their liberty, and, later, the courageous Tschuktchi, who up to this day, though nominally under Russian rule, have in reality preserved their independence."

16: Great Britain Admiralty --164 [3] G-3 (no date) 1920 Yakut
116, 651, 177.65 Russia
636.65

" The Russians used to tax the Yakuts in furs; now they tax them in coin. A poll-tax of 4 roubles is or was levied on them, the richer among them paying income tax as well."

17: Erman--292 N-3 (1828-29) 1850 Yakut -1-2
116, 533, 175, 651, 177.65 Russia
636.65

"I have already mentioned a census of the indigenous population, which had been made the preceding year in the northern part of the government of Tobolsk. A similar work was now going forward in Eastern Siberia, and I met in Yakutsk with three excellent men who were employed in its execution. Of these, M. Pyatuitki alone was connected with the finance department in St. Petersburg, while MM. Tásken and Slòbin, from the mines of Nerchinsk, were associated with him, in order to afford him the opportunity of becoming acquainted with whatever mineral riches might exist in the tracts of country gone over. The main object of the expedition was to make a new assessment of the yasak or fur tribute for the several families and tribes of the indigenous population; and we were told thay they were instructed by the government to deal with the people in the mildest possible manner. Yet they had been able to increase the yasak every where throughout the tracts occupied by the Yakuts and Tunguzes along the Upper Lena, as the number of inhabitants had increased there considerably during the last fifty years. It is said that the same result is obtained for all Siberia taken together, and that exceptions are to be found only in localities where endemic diseases prevail, as in the case of the Verkhovian Ostyaks. I heard on this occasion of a particular kind of numerical notation, invented during the present intercourse with the aboriginal tribes, and in which the new assessments were expressed and enjoined to the several communities, and the old accounts settled. It consisted of only six different figures, which represented furs

to the value of 5 and 10 kopeks, and of 1, 10, 100, and 1000 roobles respectively. When the amount of the assessment was agreed on, it was written in these runes on paper, and then cut on wooden staves as permanent memorials, as the Ostyaks and Votyaks are accustomed to do in their private transactions. To the inhabitants of remote and secluded yurts this was obviously an event of great importance, and worthy to form an epoch in their history. The Yakuts celebrated it in extemporaneous songs, of which a Russian interpreter preserved this fragment: 'The commission erected its throne with us for the good of all; receive it well, ye other tribes, that ye also may be dealt with wisely.'"

24: Wrangell--65 G-3 (1820-23) 1842 Yakut
116, 161, 651, 177.65 Russia
636.65

"In the whole Kolyma circle there are now 325 Russian peasants, citizens, and Cossacks, 1034 Jakuti, and 1139 Jukahiri and other races; in all, 2498 males, of whom 2173 pay jassak or tribute.

This jassak consists of 803 foxes and 28 sables, which may be estimated 6704 roubles, and 10,847 roubles in money, making an average of about eight roubles to be paid by every male of the Jakuti and other tribes."

9: Stadling--112-114 E-3 (1898) 1901 Yakut-1-3
116, 175, 669, 687, 177.68 Russia
636.68

"A merchant of Yakutsk in those early times has left a description in a manuscript, which has been preserved, of the way in which the natives were treated. He says: 'The Vojevodes or Military Governors began their rule by imposing the most intolerable burdens in the way of taxes, which went not only to the government, but also to appease the insatiable covetousness of the tax-gatherers. They oppressed, tormented, and tortured [113] the subjugated natives, under pretext of their taxes being in arrear, but the amount of these taxes was never fixed'. Driven to despair by these constant extortions, the natives revolted, but these risings were quenched in blood, thanks to the firearms of their oppressors. A whole series of the most barbarous punishments were then inflicted on the rebels. By order of the vojevode Golovin, the ears and noses of the rebellious Yakuts were cut off and their eyes put out; they were suspended by iron hooks fastened in their backs and between their ribs, and some of them were buried alive. Within the old fort there was a special torture-chamber, where the torture-master worked from early in the morning till late at night. A short respite was afforded the natives when quarrels arose between the vojevodes Gleboff and Golovin over the spoil. Golovin, who was dismissed and punished with the knout, was succeeded by a number of vojevodes who remained only a short time at their post. But the extortions from the natives did not diminish, and their sufferings became intolerable when Andrei Afanasevitch Baryschnieff was appointed to the office of vojevode in Yakutsk in

the year 1675. It was during his rule that political offenders and sectarians began to be exiled to the province of Yakutsk, the former usually arriving there with their tongues cut out. 'When Baryschnieff entered on his office,' says the above-quoted Moskvin in his narrative, 'a régime of veritable terrorism began. Almost every day sectarians and natives were executed in Yakutsk in the most barbarous manner.' The smallest offences were [114] punished in the most horrible way. The culprits were cut in pieces, burnt alive, boiled alive in kettles, etc.

This fiend of a vojevode was replaced by a certain Priktonsky, under whose rule the Yakuts made, in 1682, their last effort to throw off the foreign yoke. Many sectarians and some Kossacks joined the rebels. The revolt was suppressed and followed by the usual monstrous cruelties. One of the leaders of the revolt, Dschennik, for example, who had been wounded and brought to Yakutsk, was skinned alive! Those who were left of the beaten Yakuts fled to the Vilui, Yana, and Kolyma.

The reform-movement which passed over European Russia in the beginning of the 18th century did not at all touch the far-off Yakuts. Only larger and denser did the throngs of exiles sent to Yakutsk become, and they increased still more during the troublous times immediately after the death of Peter I., many of the noblest and greatest sons of Russia being expatriated to the distant tundras of Yakutsk to be buried alive

near the Arctic sea. The vojevodes still continued to rule as tsars in Yakutsk, official 'Revisors,' who were sent there to investigate into their rule, were imprisoned, knouted, and sent back to Irkutsk."

7: Shklovsky -- 72-73 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 563 697, 177.69 Russia
636.69

"The haillak [RCH: i.e., the transported Russian criminal] knows perfectly well that all is ended for him when he is once in Kolymsk; escape is impossible, for no human being can penetrate the polar forest, and to his exasperation is added a gloomy despair. He is sent to a Yakutian camp (Oulooss) and the Yakuts have to maintain him. They build a hut for him, give him a horse, supply him with meat, fish, frozen cream, tea--in a word, everything. In their reckoning each haillak costs the Oulooss ten or twelve roubles per month, and this, when the Yakuts themselves are obliged to live on bark, flavoured with a little sour milk, and when in the Verkhoyansk region they are obliged to eat field-mice so that they may not die of starvation. In order to protect their wives and daughters from the haillak, the Yakuts give him an orphan girl with whom to cohabit. Pitiable indeed is the plight of this wretched girl! Her terrible tyrant rules her with fist and cudgel, and her face is never free from bruises. The haillak so despises the Yakuts that, though he may live for years among them, the only word of their language which he will condescend to learn is 'give!.' Life under these conditions is equally intolerable on both sides. The Yakuts regard the haillak as vermin, as a savage, wicked beast that drains their life; as an evil satyr who will violate wives and daughters in the presence of their husbands [73] and fathers. On the other hand, the criminal forced to live among savages, who do not understand him, feels his position to be worse than solitary confinement. Finally, driven to desperation, he does something terrible in order to compel the

authorities to remove him from this accursed region. While I was in the Kolymsk district one of these criminals, without any reason, threw the child of a small chieftain into a fire and held him there with an iron rod until he was burnt to death. Despair gave courage to the Ykkuts. They sprang upon him, bound him, and took him to Sredne-Kolymsk, and from there to Yakutsk, where he was sentenced to twelve years' hard labour."

7: Shklovsky --73 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 563, 697, 177.69 Russia
636.69

"Near Nijne Kolymsk there is a clan of eighteen Yakuts who have to maintain fourteen of these transported criminals. It is difficult to believe, but it is a fact that the entire clan are the slaves of the haillaks. The Yakuts give to each haillak everything necessary --draw-nets, nets, dogs, sledges, etc.; the savages themselves, having no nets of their own, work for him, receiving for themselves only one-third of the total catch. Very often the haillak will trade all the things for drink, and then demand new ones."

7: Shklovsky --74-75 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut-1-2
116. 174, 563, 697, 177.69 Russia
636.69

"But what is the explanation of their abject fear of the haillak [RCH: i.e., the transported Russian criminal] and their subservience to him? One reason is of remote origin. The ancestors of the Kolymyan Yakuts were fugitive insurgents, who escaped after their defeat under Djennik, their leader. These people fled to Kolyma in deadly fear [75] after the horror of the suppression of the revolt. The ferocious tortures and executions of that time are still kept in remembrance by song and story from one generation to another. The Yakuts tremble at the mere mention of 'Russian,' and a haillak is to them the personification of all the cruel enemies mentioned in those terrible stories. The Yakut always calls him 'Tayon' (lord or master), and the haillak treats the Yakuts as his ancestors treated theirs, the poor savages enduring it all; indeed, they believe that the haillak is sent to them in order to make their lives bitter. That is one reason. Another is the absolutely unprotected condition of the Yakuts. The region is so vast that the solitary Russian official is unable to help them even if he wished to do so. It is terrible to speculate on the ultimate fate of these poor savages, when, as is probable, criminals will be sent in greater numbers to the remotest parts of Siberia. Then will the Farthest North-East be a veritable hell, where the groaning and torment of the wretched savages will never cease except with their lives.

Kind-hearted people tried to find out how to help a score or so of lepers-- a very laudable scheme--but perhaps kind-hearted people will also be found willing to find out

how to cure, not a few score,but the whole race of Yakuts of a not less terrible leprosy, which is eating away their morals and destroying their economic position; and the name of this leprosy is haillak."

7: Shklovsky -- 83-84 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116. 697, 177.69 Russia
636.69

"Almost all the prisoners in the Yakutsk prison whether sentenced or under trial, expectiong a small number of Yakuts, belonged to the exiled element. [84]

The total number of the exiles in this region is 6,090 (5,155 men and 935 women). Classified into districts the numbers are as follows: --

	Men.	Women.
Yakutsk ..	3,805 ..	.. 693
Olekminsk ..	740 ..	.. 122
Viluisk ..	471 ..	.. 114
Verkhoyansk ..	76 ..	.. 2
Kolymsk ..	63 ..	.. 4
	5,155	935

Deducting from this total 154 political prisoners (132 men, 22 women) and 1,233 religious fanatics (754 men, 479 women) there remains a formidable army of haillaks, numbering 4,703, who are an intolerable burden on the shoulders of the unhappy Yakuts.

The above figures are taken from the Revision of the Yakutsk district, 1889."

7: Shklovsky -- 224 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116. 173. 697. 177.69 Russia
636.69

"There is a vague tradition that many years ago the Yakuts lived in the south by the sea near the Mongols, (1) but that in the time of the great warriors they went farther north

1. Probably by Mongols is meant Bouriats.

to the Lena. They were pursued by the Mongols, who tried to kill them all, but happily the moon waned, and, as the Mongols never make war between full moon and new moon, the Yakuts took advantage of this interval to travel as fast as possible to where they now live. The Yakuts in this part of the country are healthier, more energetic, and less oppressed than their brothers in the Far North-East, for the criminal settlers have not so much liberty. The Oulooss tries at first to get rid of the criminal by giving him butter, a sack of barley meal, and 10s. if he will go away and never return, and those who do return meet with a very unpleasant reception. Frequently there are terrible murders, the Yakuts throwing the criminals into ice-holes, which they can do without fear: for the criminals, being outlaws, have no rights."

16: Great Britain Admiralty--168 [4] G-3 (no date) 1920 Yakut
116, 771, 776, 825, 177.77 Russia
636.77

"The Yakuts have been nominally Christian since the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the Tsar declared that they had merited this privilege, of which many of them remained absolutely unconscious. They go to church, but have a very hazy idea of their nominal religion. Their native chief god is Tangra. They have also many malevolent spirits, who are distinguished by the names of colours; cattle and horses are sacred to the spirit whose colour they bear."

15: Popov --262 E-3 (no date) 1933 Yakut
116, 326. 782, 756, 177.78 Russia
636.78

"A description of the sacrifice to the deity by the blacksmiths is given in the literature by Kornilov. (2) Due to the interesting details I quote it verbatim: 'The ceremony takes

2. Op. cit.

over the three year old black bull. The shaman takes the soul of the bull and hands it to Kitai Bahsi saying, 'I have brought to you a sacrifice for this man; do not harm him but make a blacksmith out of him.' After the shamanistic ceremony the heart of the animal is extracted with iron tongs and is placed on the anvil. The initiated must strike it with the hammer and smash it. If he crushes it with one blow he will be a good blacksmith, if he requires more, he will be medium or bad.' The custom described by Kornilov is very likely older than the one described below, as is indicated by the more cruel method of killing the animal. This method, not especially ritualistic but not general in the old times, was abandoned by order of the Russian authorities."

14: Krauss--166 E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut
116, 178, 756, 797, 177.79 Russia
636.79

The destruction of the Yakut state by a small crowd of strangers, and the administrative measures which were taken by the orthodox conquerors, necessarily impaired the position of the ancient Yakut gods. They soon began to be forgotten. The activity of the missionaries gave this development further support.

It so happened that the gods have been almost entirely forgotten. "I cannot but state," Mr. Middendorf says, "that, upon my questions concerning the peculiar qualities of certain demons and their names, I could get no information, and, upon more urgent querying, only learned that it might have been like that in ancient times. Their religion, which had been flourishing one time, has been forgotten. I saw fragments only; survivals of a former doctrine." The present religious conception, Theodor Solovjev states 30 years later in his article on "Die Ueberreste des Heidentums bei den Jakuten," are permeated with Christian elements. Christian monotheism is the background of their conceptions. The actual state of things evidently represents the last phase of vanishing shamanism.

Nevertheless, the outward conditions of life have hardly changed after the Russian conquest. There is always the same uncertainty of existence; the unsatisfactory conditions for men as well as for animals continue to exist. The sacrificial priests still everywhere and always hold position and duties of priests, physicians, and fortune-tellers (prophets).

46: Cottrell--139-140 T-2 (1840) 1842 Yakut
116, 177, 789, 821 Russia
636.82

"Another equally ridiculous notion, [RCH: as that about the flesh of the white partridge; see category 116, p. 139] and which they show their faith in by constantly acting up to it in [140] summer, is, that there are certain stones, which have the faculty of troubling the air, or producing a sudden change in the temperature. This is an ancient superstition, and probably was so generally adopted, that more than a hundred years ago, in the reign of the Empress Anne, an ukase was issued, prohibiting, under severe penalties, the use of these stones."

7: Shklovsky -- 220 T-3 (1891-92) 1916 Yakut
116, 871, 177.87 Russia
636.87

"It is easy to imagine the state of affairs which existed in the remote province of Yakutsk, and what kind of classic literature was there taught to the Yakuts. After thirteen years, permission was given to open a school for modern subjects without classics. Education has now made great strides in Yakutsk, I even know several Yakuts who went in carts by a slow and tedious journey to Tomsk, 4,500 versts from Yakutsk, and there studied at the university, afterwards passing the examination with great distinction. The late Governor of Yakutsk, Svetlitsky (afterwards transferred to Irkutsk), was especially kind to the students, and after his departure sincere grief was long felt by everyone. Every Yakut knows of Governor Svetlitsky, who was the most humane and enlightened of men, and whose influence had an ennobling effect even upon the rough people whom travellers meet in Yakutsk."